

# Planes, Trains are on the fast track to a fun film

**Planes, Trains, and Automobiles**  
 Paramount Pictures  
 Westmall 5, Capitol Square, Gateway

review by Randal Smathers

"Six bucks and my right one this plane doesn't land in Chicago," says John Candy. Candy's testicles remain intact, but the audience ends up in stitches.

As you may have guessed by the title, this movie is about travel. If you have ever been crunched into a tiny plane seat with a talkaholic next to you, you can empathize with Steve Martin's character in *Trains, Planes, and Automobiles*. Martin plays Neal Page, an ad executive who is trying to get home to Chicago from New York, on Thanksgiving weekend. From the very start, with his long-winded boss and his duel in the streets of New York for a taxi, you can tell

that he is going to have problems.

His biggest problem is in the form of John Candy, who plays Neal's nemesis: a travelling shower-curtain-ring salesman named Del Griffith. Neal's next biggest problem is the entire travel industry, who seem to be in some sort of conspiracy to keep him away from home and hearth for the holidays.

Martin and Candy might just be the best comedy team since, well since Rowan and Martin, or Martin and Lewis. Odd the way that works out, isn't it? Even Steve Martin haters might like this one. Two of six people polled about the movie identified themselves as such, and they still enjoyed the show.

That is probably because John Candy delivers most of the punch lines. For the first time in memory, a Steve Martin movie doesn't rely on his making funny faces, or his overacting, for its comedy. It also doesn't rely on biological humour (no tit jokes), although



John Candy (right) and Steve Martin (under car) fight Murphy's law of transportation.

Martin does say the "f" word a lot in one very funny scene.

There is a baker's dozen of solid character roles, but the whole show is Candy and Martin, careening around the U.S.A. One person talked to said that he was impressed by the pace, and I have to agree. All the jokes work in this movie. It just flies from one laugh to the next: please fasten your seatbelts and observe the no smoking signs.

Some of the specific comments on the show from my test group of six were contradictory on specific points. Two or three found the soundtrack annoying, which is one of my more common complaints about recent films. Although the music did intrude from time to time, it also reminded me of old Merry Melody cartoons, with the action carefully matched to the sound.

Except for the opening shot of buildings at an angle, nobody even noticed the directing at all — a great sign of a well-directed film. All the credit goes to John Hughes. Forget his earlier stuff, because it doesn't bear any

resemblance to *Trains, Planes, and Automobiles*. Hughes not only directed, but wrote and produced this movie, and he did a great job.

The most consistent complaint was the ending, which I won't give away, but it is mercifully quick, so don't sweat the small stuff. Average score for that tacky five-stars thing was four. Four people gave four stars, while the "Steve Martin" haters gave it a three and a five. The three was because it "took a while to get used to the humour." I gave a five (yes, I admit it proudly) because I laughed a lot, and what else matters in a comedy?

The best comment on the show was tongue in cheek — I think: "It was a metaphor for the search for the American dream." It was also called "A middle-class After Hours."

While I heartily recommend this movie, I'm not sure I'd advise you to go see it if you're planning on a long trip at Christmas... at least not until you get back.

## Grapes were great

**The Grapes of Wrath/The Water Walk Dinwoodie**

review by Tracy Rowan

A sold-out crowd was treated to a refreshing and lively double bill at Dinwoodie Friday night, featuring two young Vancouver-based bands, the Water Walk and the Grapes of Wrath.

The Water Walk's set was an eclectic mix of original material that moved easily between acoustic and electric-based sounds, an approach featured on the band's self entitled debut album. Easily the highlight of the Water Walk's performance was their most recognizable tune, "Turn Your Face Away," a beautiful piece which is also the band's first video effort.

While the Grapes's first couple of songs were noticeably marred by some minor sound problems, once these were worked out the band settled comfortably into their stage show.

The three original band members, Kevin Kane (vocals, guitar) and brothers Tom (vocals, bass) and Chris (drums) Hooper, were joined by keyboardist Vince Jones on stage. This proved a welcome addition as the keyboardists really helped fill out the strong pop rock melodies throughout the set.

One of the band's most evident strengths was their ability to reproduce the crispness of their vinyl efforts in the live show. The vocal harmonies especially proved to be a very catchy and powerful aspect of a nicely balanced show.

The set, while highlighted by a great version of their current single "Piece of Mind," ended strongly with an intriguing Beatles/Steppenwolf cover.

If audience response was any indication, these two bands are well on their way to making their mark in Canada's music scene.

If you missed the Grapes at Dinwoodie, you can still catch them this Tuesday and Wednesday at the Howlin' Wolf.

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